

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

104th Congress
2nd Session

Vote No. 175

June 26, 1996, 6:59 p.m.
Page S-6968 Temp. Record

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION/\$1.3 Billion from Defense to Education

SUBJECT: National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 1997 . . . S. 1745. Thurmond motion to table the Wellstone amendment No. 4347.

ACTION: MOTION TO TABLE AGREED TO, 60-40

SYNOPSIS: As reported, S. 1745, the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 1997, will authorize a total of \$267.3 billion in budget authority for national defense programs (the President requested \$254.3 billion). In real terms, this bill will authorize \$5.6 billion less, and the President requested \$18.6 billion less, than was provided in fiscal year (FY) 1996.

The Wellstone amendment would authorize the Secretary of Defense to transfer \$1.3 billion of the total amount authorized by this bill to the Education and Labor Departments for the following educational and training purposes: Pell Grants (\$577 million); Perkins Loans (\$158 million); Stafford Loans (\$71 million); dislocated worker training (\$193 million); summer youth employment (\$246 million); School-to-Work programs (\$25 million); and one-stop employment centers (\$40 million). These increases would bring the level of authorized funding for these education and training programs to the level of funding requested by President Clinton.

Debate was limited by unanimous consent. Following debate, Senator Thurmond moved to table the Wellstone amendment. Generally, those favoring the motion to table opposed the amendment; those opposing the motion to table favored the amendment.

Those favoring the motion to table contended:

Our colleagues, through artful drafting of this amendment, have come up with a means of weaseling around the defense firewall without their amendment being subject to a 60-vote point of order. Nevertheless, we and they know that their amendment has no chance of passing. The Senate on several occasions already has rejected proposals to cut defense and to eliminate the firewalls. A majority of Senators simply are not willing to weaken national security further.

In real terms this bill will authorize less spending than was provided last year. In order to buy the same level of national security in 1997 as we did in 1996, the defense budget would have to be \$273 billion. This bill is currently \$7.3 billion under that amount,

(See other side)

YEAS (60)			NAYS (40)			NOT VOTING (0)	
Republicans (50 or 94%)		Democrats (10 or 21%)	Republicans (3 or 6%)		Democrats (37 or 79%)	Republicans (0)	Democrats (0)
Abraham	Helms	Biden	Hatfield	Akaka	Kennedy		
Ashcroft	Hutchison	Breaux	Jeffords	Baucus	Kerrey		
Bennett	Inhofe	Dodd	Specter	Bingaman	Kerry		
Bond	Kassebaum	Ford		Boxer	Kohl		
Brown	Kempthorne	Heflin		Bradley	Lautenberg		
Burns	Kyl	Inouye		Bryan	Leahy		
Campbell	Lott	Johnston		Bumpers	Levin		
Chafee	Lugar	Lieberman		Byrd	Mikulski		
Coats	Mack	Nunn		Conrad	Moseley-Braun		
Cochran	McCain	Robb		Daschle	Moynihan		
Cohen	McConnell			Dorgan	Murray		
Coverdell	Murkowski			Exon	Pell		
Craig	Nickles			Feingold	Pryor		
D'Amato	Pressler			Feinstein	Reid		
DeWine	Roth			Glenn	Rockefeller		
Domenici	Santorum			Graham	Sarbanes		
Faircloth	Shelby			Harkin	Simon		
Frahm	Simpson			Hollings	Wellstone		
Frist	Smith				Wyden		
Gorton	Snowe						
Gramm	Stevens						
Grams	Thomas						
Grassley	Thompson						
Gregg	Thurmond						
Hatch	Warner						

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Buisiness
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

and the President and liberals in Congress want it to be \$18.6 billion under that amount. Do our colleagues think that our defense needs this year will be less than they were last year?

All of our top military and civilian leaders have publicly expressed concern that the low levels of funding that are being provided now will seriously undermine our future readiness, mainly due to inadequate procurement funding. General Shalikashvili, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said he is "very concerned that our procurement accounts are not where they ought to be"; General Reimer, Army Chief of Staff, said that "further deferral of modernization will incur significant risk to future readiness"; Admiral Boorda, former Chief of Naval Operations, said "If we do not modernize, we ultimately place future readiness at risk"; General Fogleman, Air Force Chief of Staff, said that "Unless we recapitalize, we are not going to be ready to meet the threats of the future"; and Secretary of Defense Perry admitted that without an immediate increase in modernization--of which procurement is the major part--"we will start to have a real problem." We have never before heard testimony from military leaders that has said, in essence, that our future national security is being endangered by the procurement policies being pursued by our current President. Given the harshness of their public assessments of the President's policies, one can only wonder at how much more critical their private assessments must be.

Our defense needs are underfunded from both a historical and operational point of view. We are at the lowest level of defense spending since 1950. Procurement has been reduced by 70 percent since 1985, and by more than 40 percent under the Clinton Administration. Defense forces have been slashed, operations and maintenance accounts have been raided to pay for ongoing operations, operating tempos have increased between 300 percent and 400 percent, 60 percent of all military housing is rated as substandard, and training has been cut. We should not be talking about putting a ceiling on defense spending; we should be talking about putting a floor on it to stop the incessant raids on its budget by liberals who want to spend the money on social programs.

Certainly many such social programs have merit. As a practical matter, programs to educate Americans are particularly valuable because they increase the productivity of the labor force. However, no domestic or international obligations rise to the level of importance of providing for the common defense. Protection of our Nation's citizens is the Federal Government's first order of business. Without meeting this paramount obligation, the basic guarantees of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness can easily become empty promises.

We are confident that a majority of Senators are not willing to lower defense spending any more than has already been agreed to on this bill. The several votes that we have already had on cutting defense or eliminating the defense firewalls proves this fact. All that is original about the Wellstone amendment is that it has come up with an artful dodge around the defense firewall by giving the Secretary of Defense the discretion to transfer authorized amounts. This dodge, though, is irrelevant, because this amendment not only has no chance of passing by supermajority vote, it has no chance of passing by majority vote. We urge Senators to join us in emphatically rejecting this raid on our underfunded defense budget.

Those opposing the motion to table contended:

The Wellstone amendment would take just a small part, \$1.3 billion, of the \$11.2 billion in spending that has been added to this bill against the Pentagon's wishes and would spend it instead on education and training programs. Our colleagues can talk all they want about the Defense Department being underfunded, but we know that its own internal audit has found that it cannot account for \$13 billion in spending last year. This fact indicates to us that its budget must be bloated. Certainly it would not be so wasteful with its money if it were not being given enough to meet its needs. Therefore, cutting spending further would not result in a smaller Department that wasted money; it would result in a smaller, less wasteful Department of Defense.

As the amendment is drafted, there would be no requirement to transfer any money. Instead, the Secretary of Defense would have the discretion to transfer \$1.3 billion of the amount authorized to be appropriated by this bill for FY 1997. The way the amendment is worded, no point of order can lie against it for violating the firewall, but we are confident that the amendment in effect would result in defense funds being spent on education and training programs. We appreciate the compliments of our colleagues on the creativity of this amendment. We hope that a majority of our colleagues appreciate the substance of the amendment as well.

In our opinion, the education and training programs that this amendment would transfer defense funds to are national security programs. Having a more educated, productive workforce would increase the stability and cohesiveness of our Nation much more than spending on a few more unneeded defense systems would. With higher education costs rapidly rising out of the reach of average citizens, we are certain that most Americans agree that it is not too much to ask to take \$1.3 billion out of a bloated defense budget to spend on education and training. We urge our colleagues to side with average Americans by voting against the motion to table the Wellstone amendment.